

From: Stephen Hooper
To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Microsoft is a monopoly. There is no doubt in my mind of that fact. It has not acted in the best interests of consumers. Again, I can say this with no doubt in my mind.

The problem I have is this: everyone (except Microsoft) seems to agree on these two statements, yet the court and the states seem to be willing to let Microsoft continue the practices that have allowed it to become a monopoly, and that have allowed it to squash any viable competition it has.

I am not a believer in retribution. I don't think we should try to take revenge upon Microsoft for acting the way it did. What I do believe in, is letting other companies that would normally be crushed under Microsoft's weight have a chance to survive and bring their products to market.

For this reason, I believe that Microsoft must have stronger regulations set to keep it in line. I do not like it, but Microsoft controls ninety percent of the world's desktops. Without stronger regulations than those proposed, Microsoft will still be free to stifle competition by using this power base, and cause a long period of declining technical accomplishment.

Microsoft does not invent anymore. It simply refines the labour of others, markets it as Microsoft's own, and undercuts the true pioneers of whatever field it chooses to enter.

This would not be so horrible, if Microsoft were just going to let others live and die by the process of natural selection present in all business dealings, but the fact that they purposefully try to murder competition (i.e. Netscape, WordPerfect, OS/2, RealPlayer), and leave consumers with no choice but to use Microsoft products, makes it abundantly clear to me that the government must step in and level the playing field.

For that reason, I believe that Microsoft should be forced in perpetuity to release to any one who wants

it, information pertaining to file formats, protocols, or any API's it has, without any charge, and without any contractual obligations against using such information.

Microsoft has taken care of killing off companies that would have given us choice in the matter of which tool to use for which job. By doing so, I believe they have taken on the responsibility of assuring us, that any tools that we need will be able to seamlessly operate in the environment they have now created, without the need to buy into using Microsofts tools.

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